

*The Character of JESUS CHRIST
as a Public Speaker considered;*

IN A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

BRIDPORT in DORSETSHIRE,

On the 17th of AUGUST, 1769,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Rev. Mr. GEORGE WATERS,

AND THE

Rev. Mr. WILLIAM YOUAT.

By ANDREW KIPPIS, D. D.

Erit igitur Eloquentis — is, qui — ita dicet, ut probet, ut
delectet, ut flectat: probare, necessitatis est; delectare,
suavitatis; flectere, victoriae. CICER. Orator.

Est Eloquentiæ, sicut reliquarum Rerum, fundamentum,
Sapientia. IBID.

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JOHN vii. 46.

Never Man spake like this Man.

IT hath frequently been intimated, by those who are disaffected to Christianity, that the testimony of the evangelists and apostles, with regard to the facts contained in the New Testament, is not sufficient; and that it is necessary for these facts to receive an additional confirmation from the testimony of enemies. To assert that the evidence given by the evangelists and apostles is not sufficient, appears very unjust; because it is the evidence of men who had the best opportunity of being acquainted with the truth of the matters they relate. It is the evidence of men who could not be imposed upon themselves, and who could have no intention to impose upon others: and is not this an evidence of such a nature as to be the most proper, strong, and convincing, that can well be offered?

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It may, however, be observed, that the conversion of every single person, who had been formerly averse to the gospel, did, in reality, constitute the testimony of an enemy. To expect ~~that~~ a man should bear witness to the mighty wonders which were done by Jesus, and, at the same time, reject his claims, would, in general, be extremely absurd. But there were great numbers, who were filled with prejudices against the Son of God, and who, in consequence of the miraculous works they beheld, gave up their prejudices, and became zealous for his sacred authority. Now, did not every instance of this kind truly form the evidence of an adversary?

It may, farther, be remarked, that many of the facts recorded in the New Testament are occasionally confirmed by Pagan writers: and it merits particular notice, that several of the most ancient and inveterate opposers of Christianity seem to have admitted the truth of the extraordinary cures which were performed by the Redeemer; but endeavoured to account for them on other principles than his having a divine commission. The principles, however,

ever, which they were obliged to adopt, are manifestly ridiculous; and would be treated with the utmost contempt in the present enlightened age.

We might, here, add, that the case of Judas affords a striking example of that sort of testimony which some sceptical persons require. Judas was certainly an enemy to our Lord; and if he could have found any thing blameable in the character, or false in the pretensions of Christ, would undoubtedly have declared it, in order to justify his own behaviour. He had the fullest opportunity of detecting the fraud, if there had been the least fraud in the conduct of Jesus. But though he was both able and willing to discover every circumstance that might affect the reputation of the Son of God, had any such circumstance existed, yet he was so far from doing it, that he was forced to proclaim his own iniquity before the Jewish sanhedrim; and to testify, in the most public manner, the innocence and integrity of the Saviour. Here, then, is the evidence of an adversary: an adversary too, who had all possible advantages for knowing whether the de-

portment of the Redeemer was indeed excellent, and his miracles truly performed ; and who must have had the strongest inclination to say the worst of his divine Master.

If we look into the sacred history, we shall find, also, that the Pharisees were obliged, more than once, in open council, to acknowledge the reality of the wonderful works which were done by our Lord or his apostles.

To pursue this subject no farther ; the fine character given of Christ in the text was the testimony of enemies. It was uttered by certain officers, whom the rulers of the Jews had sent to take Jesus, in order to put Him to death. When these officers came near Him, and they came, no doubt, with minds greatly averse to his person and claims, they were so stricken with the divinity of his doctrine, and with the dignity and beauty of his address, as to be rendered incapable of executing their purpose. Instead, therefore, of attempting it, they return with surprise to the chief priests, and exhibit this illustrious attestation in his favour ; *Never man spake like this man.*

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How true this assertion is, it will be our present business to shew ; and then to conclude with some proper reflections.

We are, first, To shew the truth of the character given of our Saviour in the text. And here a number of things might be mentioned, that contribute to the excellence of public speaking ; but we shall reduce our thoughts to two or three heads, which will comprise the leading circumstances that constitute the value of any discourse.

1. It will be found that never man spoke like the blessed Jesus, if we consider the subjects upon which He treated, and the sentiments He advanced with regard to those subjects. That the importance of its subject, and the solidity of its sentiments, are of vast, nay, of essential consequence to the real worth of a discourse, cannot possibly be called into question. Let us, then, examine the sermons of our Saviour in this view ; and we shall easily perceive that they are abundantly superior to whatever the human understanding hath been able to produce.

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The affairs that were discussed by the celebrated orators of antiquity were usually of a temporal nature. Sometimes, indeed, they were affairs of great moment, and such as related to the being and welfare of nations and public societies; but still they were only temporal. Whereas the things which were treated of by the Redeemer were the grand, the everlasting, concerns of religion. The nature, unity, attributes, and moral government of God; the worship we ought to pay Him; the method in which his favour may be acquired; the glorious scheme He hath established for our pardon, recovery, and salvation; the duties that are incumbent upon us, in our several relations and characters of life; the supports and assistances which shall be afforded us in the discharge of these duties; the privileges we enjoy as Christians; the resurrection of the dead; the strict account we shall pass through at the last day; and the final issue of that account, in our eternal destruction or our eternal felicity;—these, these were the themes upon which our Lord spoke to the children of men: and these are themes infinitely more weighty than even
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the great matters that employed the eloquence of the noblest orators, when they contended for the liberties, and the very existence, of the republics to which they belonged.

As the subjects discussed by our Saviour were thus inexpressibly momentous, so the sentiments advanced by Him were incomparably preferable to what had hitherto been offered on the same subjects.

We shall find in his system of religion two circumstances, which must always constitute the chief value of every religious system; purity and perfection.

That the doctrine of the gospel is strictly pure and holy, is plain from its whole tenor; nor doth it contain a single page but what is declarative of this truth. The discourses of our divine Master are solid, rational, and manly; absolutely free from all foolish mixtures, and from all superstitious opinions. Is there one expression in them which, in any respect, encourages, or allows, the least degree of iniquity? Do they not positively insist upon an inward principle of piety and goodness, and assure us that nothing short of this can be acceptable to the Deity? Do they not severely condemn

demn the behaviour of such as trust to speculations, ceremonies, and external devotion; and require of us the most sacred, refined, and heavenly dispositions of soul?

The perfection of the religious system delivered by Christ is equal to its purity.

If we look into it, with even a slight attention, we shall perceive that it is not defective in any important point. It prescribes our duty in all its extent, as reaching to ourselves, to our fellow-creatures, and to the blessed God. It informs us how we ought to act in the different relations of human life, and considers us with regard to the whole of our existence. It withholds no branch of knowledge from us that may conduce to our welfare; is clear, certain, and infallible in its declarations and dictates; provides for our most substantial comfort and happiness in the present world, and for our supreme dignity and bliss in the realms of immortality.

Now, if we examine the writings of the Pagans in a religious view, will it not be extremely evident that they cannot compare with the sermons of Jesus, either with respect to purity or perfection?

How deficient the writings of the Pagans are with respect to purity, appears from the weak and fanciful things, and from the absurd principles, that are to be found in their most celebrated compositions. The best of their philosophical works, that have been transmitted into our hands, do undeniably advance several opinions and sentiments which are trifling or groundless. Sure we are, that the most admirable persons whom the Heathen ages produced did frequently utter very strange thoughts, and did frequently reason in a false or superficial manner; though it must, at the same time, in justice to them, be acknowledged that they have delivered many passages which are peculiarly beautiful, fine, and noble. In short, not one of the ancient philosophers can pretend to vie with the discourses of the Son of God, with regard to a freedom from every kind of absurdity, error, or vicious mixture.

As little can the writings of the Pagans pretend to vie with the doctrine of the gospel, in the complete view which it gives of truth and duty. How defective they are, with relation to various points of vast

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moment to the interests of knowledge and goodness, cannot have escaped the observation of those who have any acquaintance with them. Where shall we meet with such rational, such elevated, such full descriptions of the ever-blessed Deity; where shall we meet with such clear, such certain, such awful accounts of a future state, as are to be found in the New Testament? But not to insist upon the absurdities which the gentile authors have advanced concerning the nature of the gods, and the confusion with which they talk on the immortality of the soul, we shall only take notice, at present, that their systems of morality did greatly fail in delineating the worship, reverence, and obedience we owe to our Maker. Though a regard to the Almighty is the prime dictate of religion, and the grand chain which holds us to the practice of universal virtue, yet it is seldom treated upon in the works of the philosophers; and especially those works that were composed before the appearance of our Saviour.

But if we carry our thoughts forwards to the dispensation of Moses, will it not still be evident that never man spoke like
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the Redeemer? The dispensation of Moses did, indeed, proceed from the God and Father of lights by extraordinary revelation; displayed to mankind the fundamental truths of piety, afforded many admirable discoveries, and was peculiarly suitable to the age in which it was published, and the people for whom it was intended. Nevertheless, how greatly was it inferior to the doctrine of Christ! Its principal merit was its being preparatory to a better system; and, however excellent it might be in various respects, it had chiefly a reference to the present life, its direct rewards and punishments being no other than temporal: whereas the amiable Jesus hath opened to us the momentous concerns of immortality, and the unspeakable glories of the celestial world. As to the Abrahamic covenant, it did more immediately partake of the nature of the gospel itself; but then it only contained promises of the blessings hereafter to be communicated, and not a full explanation of the blessings themselves.

The time would utterly fail us, should we attempt to recount all the illustrious matters our divine Master hath treated

upon, and all the Godlike sentiments He hath advanced concerning them. Besides the pure and perfect view He hath given of natural religion, hath He not presented us with new discoveries, motives, and prospects, which are beyond the reach of human reason? How noble, how transporting, how copious a subject is the redemption of man! How deeply are the pardon, comfort, and final salvation of every one of us interested in this subject! and this is the subject which the Saviour hath displayed in all its extent and lustre. He hath displayed, in his discourses upon it, the boundless mercy of his heavenly Father, his own astonishing condescension and tenderness, the importance and necessity of his death and resurrection, the office and assistances of the holy Spirit, the method in which we receive pardon and justification, together with a number of other weighty truths which are our honour and our joy.

For a confirmation of whatever hath been alledged on this head, we may, with confidence, appeal to the sacred lectures recorded by the Evangelists; which will abundantly evince that never man spoke
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like our Lord, with regard to the dignity of the affairs He treated on, or the solidity of the sentiments that appeared in his sermons.

2. It will be found that never man spoke like the blessed Jesus, if we reflect upon the manner in which his discourses were composed and delivered. Composition and delivery are circumstances very much insisted on by critics, in their descriptions of a complete orator; and they certainly deserve some degree of attention, though they are by no means so material as the thoughts we have already considered. Indeed, the general declaration of the text would not have been greatly affected, had there been nothing peculiarly graceful in the language or address of our Saviour's speeches; because the grand excellence of a teacher who is sent from God is to communicate those informations and principles which are calculated to purify the soul, and to qualify it for everlasting happiness. The business of a divine instructor is not merely to please, but to improve; not solely to entertain the fancy, but chiefly to mend the heart. If the truths He reveals have a tendency to

enlighten the understanding, to correct the temper, and to train us up for an immortal salvation, what doth it greatly signify tho' they should not be proposed to mankind with much beauty; any farther, at least, than as something of this kind may be essentially connected with the main end which He has in view?

It will, notwithstanding, be manifest, upon a careful enquiry, that there was a deal of true elegance and force both in the composition and delivery of the Redeemer's lessons.

The ancient Pagans carried eloquence to a vast height, valued themselves prodigiously on the progress they had made in it, and have left works behind them which have a surprizing sublimity, strength, and harmony. We are not, however, to expect the same exactness in our Lord's discourses, or the same regard to little embellishments. Such a conduct would have been totally unworthy of Him, and would have rather favoured of human art.

The character of Christ, and the design of his sermons, required a very different sort of composition; and in that sort which
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was proper for his purpose, He hath had no equals. He was a Lawgiver from heaven ; He was the Saviour of the world ; He was the Son of God. It would, therefore, have been wholly unsuitable to his dignity to have dealt in laboured ornaments and pomp of expression, and to have studied a curious arrangement of words. Accordingly, his discourses are simple, yet grand. They are plain, clear, and solid ; have a charming mixture of the rational and the affectionate ; and unite familiarity and ease with majesty and pathos. His parables, if examined with attention, will be found peculiarly fine ; and his method of taking his instructions, metaphors, and language from the objects around Him, hath a most admirable propriety and beauty. In short, nothing could be better adapted to the end He had in view than his sermons were ; and must not that be acknowledged to constitute the principal excellence of an orator ?

If, from the composition, we direct our thoughts to the delivery of our divine Master's heavenly lectures, we shall have reason to believe that they were uttered in a
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manner remarkably pleasing and agreeable. This seems to be a circumstance that particularly excited the encomium of the text. This seems, likewise, to be hinted at in the account we have of the astonishment which the Jews were seized with, when they heard his discourses : and of this we have express evidence, Luke iv. 22. where it is recorded of his countrymen at Nazareth, that they wondered at the graceful words which proceeded out of his mouth. One thing we may be well assured of, that He did himself feel the power of those truths which He communicated to others ; and *that* is a mighty recommendation of a public Speaker. Was He not possessed of all the virtues which He inculcated upon his hearers ? Nay, was He not possessed of them in a degree supremely amiable and perfect ? Was He not a living and spotless example of whatever He taught ? Must not, therefore, his piety and benevolence have shone delightfully in his countenance, and have given a charming variety, emphasis, and sweetness to his aspect, his voice, and his action ?

Moreover,

Moreover, the authority with which the sacred lectures of our Lord were preached, was a vast and unparalleled advantage in their delivery. This is particularly taken notice of, by St. Matthew *, as what had a great influence upon the minds of the people. Our Saviour did not reason and plead in the method of common orators, though his discourses were highly rational and pathetic; neither did He, like the Scribes, rest the proof of his doctrines upon the opinions or traditions of the elders. On the contrary, as He was a divine legislator, He spoke in his own name. I SAY UNTO YOU, was the language He used, and that the use of this language was accompanied with a peculiar majesty, appears from the astonishment with which his auditors were stricken. Indeed, He might well assume an unusual grandeur in the utterance of his speeches; for He was a teacher sent from God, and had the power of performing miracles in confirmation of all that He advanced. The wonderful works which He did, added an amazing efficacy to his heavenly sermons, and demanded, in the strongest terms, the attention of the world.

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* Matt. vii. 28, 29.

Can we survey the several thoughts which have now been suggested, without reflecting how happy the persons were who lived in the time of our Lord's ministry upon earth, and had the opportunity of hearing his invaluable instructions from his own mouth? What a glorious, what a ravishing, entertainment must it have been to be personally present, when He discussed the most sublime and awful subjects, when He communicated the purest and noblest sentiments, when He delivered his spiritual truths with the utmost beauty of expression, and the utmost gracefulness and dignity of address? Are we not ready to wish that we had enjoyed so delightful a privilege? Do not we imagine that we should have hung with transport upon the Saviour's lips, and have yielded our whole souls to him, to be directed and governed at his pleasure? Yet alas! such is the stupidity, such the degeneracy, of mankind, that great multitudes, who had so mighty an advantage put into their hands, treated it with neglect and contempt.

We have, however, the satisfaction of
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knowing that this was not universally the case: for it may be observed, once more,

3. That never man spoke like the blessed Jesus, if we consider the effect which his discourses had upon numbers of his hearers. It is possible for a composition to have the highest internal merit, without being attended with a proportionable success. The best lessons may, through the folly, prejudices, and iniquity of mankind, be disregarded; and it is well known that our Saviour was too much and too generally slighted. But had He been slighted in a far greater degree than He really was, his sermons would not have had the less excellence in themselves. They would still have been equally divine in their nature, equally noble in their purposes.

Nevertheless, the actual utility of public speaking depends upon its answering the end intended to be produced by it; nor is it likely that it should be wholly fruitless, where it comprises the qualities already mentioned. Inattentive, corrupt, and wicked as the larger part of the human race may be, it is still highly improbable that they should be all of them insensible to a mo-

mentous and interesting subject, and to solid and manly sentiments, when accompanied with nervous and pathetic composition, and recommended by a just, lively, and forcible delivery. With regard to the lectures of Jesus, notwithstanding the indifference and dislike they were in many instances received with, it will appear that the influence they have had is entirely unparalleled. A fine and remarkable proof of this influence is furnished by the persons who uttered the words of the text. 'Tho' they went with a determined resolution to seize Christ, and to carry Him a prisoner to the Jewish rulers; they were, as hath already been hinted, so stricken with his preaching as to be utterly incapable of executing their commission: nor were they diverted from their scheme in consequence of any personal application that was made to them by our Lord, but merely by hearing what He was speaking to others. It hath been recorded as an instance of uncommon eloquence, that a famous Roman advocate was able, by the force of his pleading, and the earnestness of his entreaties, to obtain his life from some soldiers,

who were sent with exprefs orders to kill Him. But had not the oratory of our great Master a like effect, though He descended to no supplications, though He does not seem to have taken the least notice of the officers who were commanded to apprehend Him, and only continued his discourses to the people in general?

The whole chapter in which the text lies, doth, also, afford feveral testimonies to the efficacy of the Redeemer's sermons. For we there find that they removed the prejudices of considerable numbers, and induced them to credit his divine authority. Indeed, the extraordinary efficacy of the Redeemer's sermons is manifest from the conversions He made during his ministry below, and which were more numerous than might at first view be imagined: for we are told, in different places †, that many at the passover, that many of the people, that many of the Samaritans, that many of the Jews who came to Mary the sister of Lazarus, nay, that many among the chief rulers believed on Him. We may add, that his inveterate enemies, the priests, the Pharisees, and the principal members

† John ii. 23. vii. 31. iv. 39. xi. 45. xii. 42.

members of the sanhedrim did, in a certain sense, believe on Him, even while they continued to persecute Him in a cruel manner. Though they might not, perhaps, be fully convinced that He was the Messiah, they were convinced that He was an extraordinary person, and that He had actually performed miraculous works : but their fear of the Romans, their attachment to their reputation and interests, and the hardness of their hearts were so strong as to make them act in opposition to the persuasion of their own minds.

Nor was the influence of our blessed Lord's discourses confined within the limits of his residence upon earth. Have not his discourses been attended with glorious trophies of success, through every subsequent age of the world ? Have not thousands and thousands, by their means, been brought to the belief of the truth and the practice of holiness ? The noblest speakers of antiquity could act only upon a very small portion of mankind ; whereas the force of the Saviour's lessons was experienced not only by many in his own time, but hath been experienced by an innumerable multitude,
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of all kingdoms, and nations, and tongues. The force of the Saviour's lessons hath, in some measure, been experienced even in enlarging the knowledge, civilizing the manners, and adding to the virtues of those countries and persons who have not publicly submitted to his authority; and we trust that there is a period in reserve, in which the instructions of Jesus will be still more thoroughly assented to, more deeply felt, and more universally obeyed.

The nature, too, of the effect produced by the sermons of Christ, shews their infinite superiority to all other compositions.

The ancient orators could only extend their influence to some present purpose, and bring about some immediate resolution with regard to temporal affairs. But have not the Redeemer's lectures spread the beams of divine light through the Jewish and the Pagan world? Have they not illuminated the minds of those who were plunged into the depths of ignorance and darkness? Have they not communicated the principles of piety and virtue to those who were immersed in corruption and wickedness? Have they not dispensed consolation and hope to
such

such as laboured under the burden of their iniquities? Have they not administered fortitude and joy to such as have been exposed to the severest afflictions? In short, have they not enabled vast numbers to stand against the power of temptation, to bear the terrors of persecution, and to face the hour of death with pleasure? Nay, is not the effect produced by them absolutely everlasting? Do they not introduce the persons who obey their dictates into a state of endless perfection, dignity, and felicity in the heavenly mansions? Yes, these are the mighty consequences which spring from the lectures of the Saviour. Here, then, is indeed the triumph of eloquence. How insignificant are the greatest things that were performed by the eminent speakers of antiquity, when compared with the illustrious, the astonishing events which have proceeded from our Lord's discourses!

To crown all; the blessed Jesus is an orator who can Himself succeed the labours, and reward the endeavours, of those who comply with his exhortations. He doth not only instruct us how to behave, but will convey the aids of the Spirit, to
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keep us steadfast in the path of our duty. He doth not only point out eternal happiness as what may be the result of obedience to his precepts, but ensures this eternal happiness to his sincere followers. He hath received from his heavenly Father full authority and ability to raise the just to immortal glory at the last day, and He will certainly do it. He will appear with inexpressible majesty; will confirm, in the presence of men and angels, the grand truths He delivered upon earth; openly applaud his faithful servants, and cause them to sit down with Him on his throne, for ever and ever.

Thus we have seen the truth of the character given of our Lord in the text: and, from what hath been said, we may observe,

1. That we cannot rationally hesitate in pronouncing that He must have been a divine teacher. Where shall we meet with so admirable a scheme of religion as He hath delivered? Nothing equal to it, nothing like it, can be found, though we should search the world from the rising of

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the sun to the going down of the same. Whence, then, could our Saviour derive it, but from the great Parent of light and of mercy?

It is true that the powers of reason, if duly attended to, will lead us to the discovery of several important principles. It is true that the supreme Being hath implanted in the breast a moral sense of good and evil. But, without derogating from the faculties which the Almighty has been pleased to bestow upon us, without blaspheming the law which He hath written on the heart, we may venture to assert that the system of the gospel is beyond the unassisted abilities and labours of man. A system so clear, so compleat, so noble, so abounding with uncommon consolations, motives, and prospects, could only be produced by a person who was a messenger from heaven. The answer, therefore, which Jesus returned to the Jews, is evidently rational and just. They asked, with surprise, how He knew letters, having never learned; and his reply was, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me *.

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* Jon vii. 15, 16.

This being the case, it follows,

2. That we should pay the utmost reverence and obedience to his doctrine. We ought to receive, as the dictate of God, whatever the Saviour hath declared to be true; and should render it a calm, serious, and deep attention. What was said to Him by St. Peter, on a particular occasion, may be adopted by every one of us †; Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. We ought to read the New Testament with frequency and care, acquaint ourselves more and more with its momentous, its invaluable contents, and endeavour to understand its real meaning. Above all, we should strive to imbibe the heavenly temper recommended in the Redeemer's sermons; and should apply his sacred lessons to the amendment of our hearts and the regulation of our conduct.

This, O! ye children of men, ye should be earnestly solicitous to do, if ye have any regard for your improvement, perfection, and advantage, either for time or for eternity. When the blessed Jesus addresses you in his discourses, reflect who it is that

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speaks

† John vi. 68.

speaks to you. It is no less a personage than the Son of God. When the blessed Jesus addresses you in his discourses, what doth He call you to consider? Why, He calls you to consider your everlasting interest, dignity, and felicity. Will you, then, be so stupid as to disobey his sacred invitations? Let me beseech you not to be guilty of so much folly and iniquity, but to be daily growing in the knowledge of the truth, as revealed in the gospel; and to be daily advancing in the spiritual dispositions which are there enforced by such mighty motives ‡. Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go; keep her, for she is your life. Instead of being devoted to light and trifling reading, be persuaded so to apply to the holy scriptures as to secure substantial blessings, and to become wise unto immortal salvation.

From what has been said, we may perceive,

3. The beneficial nature of the Christian ministry, and the regard which ought to be paid to it. Was our Lord the most excellent Teacher that ever existed? Was his religion established by his heavenly Father
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‡ Prov. iv. 13.

to conduct sinners from darkness to light, from vice to holiness, from anxiety to consolation, from eternal ruin to eternal happiness. It must, then, be of the utmost importance that such a religion should be continued in the world, and that its benevolent purposes should be carried on from one age to another. With this view it was that an order of men hath been appointed, whose business and duty it is to recommend and enforce the doctrines and precepts of their great Master, to lead and animate the devotion of his followers, to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the insensible, to comfort the afflicted, to confirm the righteous, and, in general, to assist the children of Adam in the attainment of pious dispositions and everlasting blessedness. Such is the genuine design of the Christian ministry; and who can justly assert that it is not a most honourable, useful, and laudable institution? Who can justly assert that the office, in itself considered, doth not deserve our sincere approbation and respect; or reasonably blame the apostolic injunction, that the persons who execute this office should

be highly esteemed in love for their work's sake *?

Nothing can be more detestable than a sensual, covetous, proud, bigoted, and tyrannical clergy. Nothing has been more fatal to the cause of liberty, to the peace of society, and to the real interests of our sacred religion. But when the preachers of the gospel do not act as if they were Lords over God's heritage; when they speak as in the presence of that Almighty Being who trieth the heart; when, with humility and faithfulness, they strive to answer the end of their profession; when they behave holily and unblameably among them that believe; when they possess the temper of the amiable Redeemer; they are certainly entitled to affection, encouragement, and support. It is incumbent upon their hearers to contribute, as much as possible, to the satisfaction of their lives; and to the enabling of them to discharge with pleasure, and encounter with fortitude, the obligations and difficulties of their station. Their services ought to be attended to with seriousness, candour, and impartiality: they should be permitted freely to declare and explain

* 1 Theff. v. 13.

explain whatever they apprehend to be the truth; and, above all, that practical regard should be paid to their exhortations, which may give them the unspeakable delight of beholding that they have not laboured in vain, but have, in fact, been the honoured instruments of promoting the supreme welfare of immortal souls.

Once more,

4. What a beautiful model hath Jesus left for ministers to follow! It hath always been laid down as a rule, in every art and science, that those who are ambitious to excel, should copy the most perfect patterns. Poets study the noblest works of the human imagination, painters design after the greatest masters, and statuaries set before them the most finished pieces of sculpture, that they may imbibe the same glorious enthusiasm, and transfer the same accuracy and graces into their own productions. And should not the preachers of the gospel be equally solicitous to imitate the divine example of their Saviour?

Did He treat on the most sublime, the most engaging, the most awful subjects which were ever discussed? Did He deliver
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the most solid, useful, and important sentiments that were ever advanced? Did He clothe his conceptions in the most proper and agreeable dress? Did He pronounce his sermons with unparalleled fervour, sweetness, and dignity? Did He aim at nothing less than the highest, the eternal, felicity of mankind? Was He the most efficacious speaker that hath lived upon the earth? To Him, then, let us apply, as the unerring standard by which our behaviour ought to be regulated.

It may, no doubt, be serviceable to have some regard to the best human teachers, and to endeavour after an acquirement of their distinguishing excellencies. But it should be our chief aim, our grand ambition, our most earnest solicitude to resemble the blessed Jesus, as much as we are able, in all the momentous particulars which constituted his character as a public Speaker; and we should, especially, be desirous of possessing those inward dispositions that were the sources of his beautiful conduct. Yes, it should be our ardent concern, our perpetual prayer, that we may bear the likeness of Christ, in that flaming zeal for the

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the honour of his heavenly Father, and the salvation of immortal souls, which animated his sacred instructions, his mighty labours, and his unparalleled sufferings. Happy, thrice happy, is the person who comes the nearest to that consummate model which the Saviour hath exhibited ! Such a one, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, will still be entitled to the truest consolation. He will be entitled to the approbation of his own conscience, to the applause of his great Master, and to the peculiar favour of his Maker. God grant that the number of his faithful ministers may be continually increased ! May their services be attended with the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit ! and may they have many converts, who shall be their joy in this life, and their everlasting crown of glory at the day of final retribution. *Amen.*

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his sacred instructions, his mighty labours,
and his unparalleled sufferings. Happy,
thrice happy, is the person who comes the
nearest to that consummate model which
the Saviour hath exhibited! Such a one,
whether men will hear, or whether they
will forbear, will still be entitled to the
trust, confidence, and love of God. Will be entitled to
the approbation of his own conscience, to
the applause of his great Master, and to the
peculiar favour of his Maker. God grant
that the number of his faithful ministers
may be continually increased! May their
labours be attended with the abundant in-
crease of the Holy Spirit; and may they
have many converts, who shall be their joy
in this life, and their everlasting crown of
glory in the day of final redemption. Amen.

